

To Margaret Randall de Mondragon

Guns and fiestas,
my friends said
look for a bulge at the hip
when you stop anywhere in Mexico,
listen for the guitar.

But Meg, when we first met you
your belly was full
of the baby that was to be
Ximena

(we heard her
first cry, we saw her
black hair, wet on her head)

Ximena. Where she goes,
a Mexican girl, all her life
she will carry with her
our eyes, our ears,
the air of that distant
night of Mexico we carry now.

Margaret, now when we talk
of Mexico we say
listen for the voice of babies
born, watch for women
with big bellies,

the warmth of that place
is not a Spanish festival
or the weight of a concealed weapon,

we carry it in our loins,
the warmth of Mexico
grows like a bonfire
in the love we make now
far in our starry north.

-- George Bowering

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